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HOMESCHOOLERS USE OF THE ATLANTIC
COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

by
Jane-Agnes Stanwood

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
April 24, 2001

Approved by _____
Professor.

Date Approved May 1, 2001

ABSTRACT

Jane-Agnes Stanwood
Homeschoolers use of the Atlantic County Library System
2001
Dr. M. Shontz
Masters of Arts in Public Librarianship

This research investigated the needs of homeschool educators. Public libraries can play an important role in homeschooled children's social and academic lives. The study focused on whether the needs of homeschool educators from the Atlantic County area of New Jersey were being met and what other public library services could be offered to them. The number of parents reported as homeschooling their children is growing. Larger and larger numbers of homeschoolers may be relying on the public library for some of or all of their curriculum needs. By conducting a survey of the needs of homeschool educators, public librarians may better service the growing number of homeschoolers. A written survey was distributed to two homeschooling groups in Atlantic County. The survey was distributed at the groups' meetings in February of 2001. Twenty-nine surveys were distributed at two homeschooling meetings. Twenty-eight were returned. The surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Homeschool educators did use the library on a regular basis. Homeschool educators also used many of the services and programs that the library offered. The results of the study suggested that the Atlantic County Library System was meeting the needs of homeschool educators.

MIMI-ABSTRACT

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The number of children homeschooled has grown significantly in recent years. *U. S. News & World Report*, in recent report, estimated one point seven million children are being educated by homeschooling (Kleiner, 2000). In the early eighties the National Home Education Research Institute estimated around fifteen thousand children were homeschooled in the United States. Now the National Home Education Research Institute estimates the “number at between 1.5 million and 1.9 million students- close to three percent of the school-age population. They say the homeschool population is growing seven to eighteen percent a year”(Paulson, 2000 p.18). Homeschooling is becoming socially accepted also. There are a wide range of reasons why parents have decided to home school their children, almost to numerous to list. There are many methods of teaching for homeschoolers. The public library may be the fundamental source of information for families that homeschool their children. Public libraries can therefore play an important role in homeschooled children’s social and academic lives. As this is a new kind of library patron, public libraries need to know if they are meeting the needs of homeschoolers, and what services they would use. Libraries may have to change some policies to help both children and parents receive the kinds of information they need. Libraries may also need to reevaluate the services, policies, and programming.

Purpose of the Study

This research investigated the needs of homeschool educators. The study focused on whether the needs of homeschool educators from the Atlantic County area of New Jersey were being met and what other public library services could be offered to them.

The number of parents reported as homeschooling their children is growing. Larger and larger numbers of homeschoolers may be relying on the public library for some of or all of their curriculum needs. By conducting a survey of the needs of homeschoolers educators, public librarians may better service the growing number of homeschoolers. Libraries may see that programming schedules, collection policies, and other policies may have to be changed.

Two homeschooling groups who use the Atlantic County Library system were surveyed to find out what kind of services they used and would like the library to provide. The survey included questions asking homeschool educators about library services, for example: How often do you use the library and what services do you use the most? How many times do you renew books? Do you attend library programs? What programs did the library offer that you found helpful? What kinds of programs would you like the library to offer? Have you found the library collection adequate for your needs? If items were not in the collections were you able to use the Interlibrary Loan Program? Have you or your children attended the technology class held at the library? What kinds of technology class would be helpful to you? Would tours of the library be useful?

Definition of terms

According to *ALA Glossary of Library and Information Science*, the term public library refers to any library which provides general library services without charge to all residents of a given community, district, or region. Supported by public or private funds, the public library makes its basic collections and basic services available to the population of its legal service area without charges to individual users, but may impose charges on users outside its legal service area. Products and services may or may not be provided without fee. For this research paper, the term library refers to public libraries as described above (Young, 1983 p. 181).

The term staff refers to the entire group of persons who together execute the activities necessary for accomplishing the goals of an organization or any of its administrative units (Young, 1983 p.214). The term homeschool educator is defined as the parents who are engaged in the activity of teaching children at home. The term homeschooled is defined as children who have been educated at home and not in a traditional school setting. The term homeschooling is defined as the activity parents use to educate their homeschooled children.

Limitations and Assumptions

This research was limited to homeschool educators who belonged to the two homeschooling organizations that use the Atlantic County Library System. This research excluded homeschool educators who did use the Atlantic County Library System but who were not part of the two homeschooling organization surveyed.

It was assumed that the homeschoolers gave honest answers and were willing to participate. Another assumption of this study was that homeschoolers used the library

and that the library was an important place of information and services for them. Finally, it was assumed that homeschool educators' needs were different from those of other library patrons.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature concerning homeschooling has grown in recent years. Popular publications carry articles about the general aspects of homeschooling. Some research has been done concerning the public library's role in homeschooling, but much still remains anecdotal.

Gemmer published two articles in *ALKI* about homeschooling. Her first article published in December of 1987 discussed some research about homeschooling in Washington State. The article's discussion was based on The Washington Homeschool Research Project. It is unclear if the researchers surveyed homeschoolers and librarians, or someone else in this study. Gemmer provided no statistical information about librarians' responses but did discuss librarians' misconceptions about homeschoolers (Gemmer, 1987).

Gemmer published another article about a 1988 study in Whatcom County, Washington. It is unclear from her report if she was one of the researchers involved in the study, or if she was just commenting and giving her analysis of this research. The actual questionnaire was not included in the article. The objectives of the survey (Gemmer, 1991) were to "identify as many homeschool families as possible in Whatcom County.... To examine barriers to library use by homeschoolers" (p. 20). One hundred and sixty-five surveys were sent out and only 86 were returned. Ninety-five percent of

the homeschoolers responding claimed that they used the library once a month or more often.

Four questions from the survey were discussed in the rest of the article. Gemmer supplied graphics and charts illustrating the results of these four questions. Gemmer did not have a conclusion but, supplied six topics that she believed can help public librarians improve service to homeschoolers. Gemmer (1991, March) concluded with “It is time that libraries and librarians take a more active role in supporting the educational efforts of homeschooled families” (p. 22).

School library Journal published an article in 1991, about homeschooling and public libraries. In it Madden also discussed a survey of homeschoolers in Whatcom County, Washington. This could be the same survey that Gemmer discussed in *ALKI*, however, their numbers do not agree with each other. Madden found that 93% of homeschoolers in Whatcom County used the library and Gemmer found it slightly more with 95%. This was the only statistical number given in the entire article. Madden focused on the reason why parents homeschool and gave suggestions for librarians to improve services to homeschoolers. Madden also tried to dispel some misconceptions about homeschoolers. This article did not go into any detail about the survey or how it was conducted. The methodology or questions were not given. It did not state how the survey was completed or how many people participated in it. It is also not clear who she surveyed. From the results of the survey, it can be presumed that Madden surveyed homeschoolers, but she may also have surveyed librarians too. A complete analysis of Madden’s research can not be done with the limited information given.

Morley and Wooten published their research on homeschooling patrons using libraries in *North Carolina Libraries*, in the spring of 1993. Morely and Wooten surveyed homeschoolers and librarians using what appeared to be descriptive statistical methods with percentages. Morely and Wooten's (1993, Spring) purpose of the study was stated very early in the article, "The purpose of this study was to ascertain what relationships do exist between the homeschool family and the public library in North Carolina" (p.38). Morley and Wooten (1993) discussed the benefits of this research and why it was important to understand the relationship between the library and the homeschooling families.

The benefit of such research is the bringing to the forefront the information and service needs of this ever-growing user group and to ascertain whether these needs are adequately met by library professionals. To facilitate gathering such information, this study was designed to determine how much the homeschool teachers (parents) depend on libraries for educational materials and what role (active or passive) is being played by public librarians in the homeschooling process (p. 38).

In their research, Morley and Wooten defined only one term, homeschool. The researchers did not include any assumptions in their research. Even though their study was limited to selected counties in North Carolina, Morely and Wooten, believed that their study results would have national implications. In some sense, this may be true, but more importantly, each state in the United States has their own specific laws regulating homeschooling. Some states require testing of not only the children, but also parents may have to take tests and complete courses about homeschooling. The degree the role each

state plays in lives of homeschoolers varies from one extreme to the other. In the conclusion and discussion section of the article, Morely and Wooten (1993, Spring) stated their “implications nationwide” (p. 42).

With the increasing popularity of alternative school options such as homeschooling and educational vouchers, public librarians throughout the United States must erase their own paradigm of the traditional student and be willing to meet the needs for whatever educational practice is chosen, this adjustment in thinking will reinforce the image of the public library as an educational institution, one that considers public service a priority (p.42).

Morely and Wooten (1993) briefly discussed the literature already written about homeschoolers and the library. The researchers quoted from three studies but they did not discuss any other research done in this area. Morely and Wooten randomly surveyed forty homeschooling teachers and thirty public library professionals. The surveys were not included in the article, nor were there any graphs or charts. No information was given on how the surveys were distributed. The questions Morely and Wooten discussed in the article did reflect the purpose of their study and the researchers discussed each survey separately and then they correlated the results.

Twenty-one of the forty homeschooler surveys were completed (58%) and twenty-one out of thirty public librarian surveys were returned (67%). In their responses, Morely and Wooten found out that only 10% (two homeschoolers) used the local school systems’ curriculum. When the researchers asked homeschoolers if they had ever requested the school’s curriculum through the public library 95% said no. Morely and Wooten then presumed that these same homeschoolers wanted this information although

they clearly had responded in the negative. "The twenty (95 percent) no response showed either an assumption that the material would not be there or ignorance of the fact that it might be available" (Morley and Wooten, p.39). The researchers did not consider that homeschoolers did not want to see the curriculum of the local schools. In the results of the librarian's survey, Morely and Wooten (1993 Spring) stated:

Access to public school curriculums greatly assists the homeschooling family in developing a program of study at home... The public library professionals surveyed were questioned as to whether they had curriculum guides for the public school districts in their area and whether they assisted homeschoolers with curriculum development. All respondents revealed that their collections do not contain curriculum guides, nor do they assist homeschoolers with curriculum development (p.40).

The results of the Morely and Wooten survey showed that homeschoolers were not interested in curriculum of the local schools, but Morely and Wooten suggested that it was significant. Morely and Wooten (1993, Spring) concluded that :

This study also signals the need for cooperation and communication between public librarians and the homeschool users in order to serve this group adequately and to educate non-homeschoolers on the basics of the educational practice. Ignorance of the ideologies intrinsic in this choice of schooling can be a major stumbling block in quality library service... Open communication is necessary if public libraries are to play the role expected of them by homeschool families and if these families are to receive the educational support they need for the public library (p. 42).

In 1994, Geist completed a study with Florida public librarians and homeschoolers. At that time, Florida had the highest homeschooled population in the country (Geist, 1994). Geist surveyed eleven counties in Florida. She chose the counties with the highest number of homeschoolers. In Florida homeschoolers were required to register with the State Department of Education and complete a survey. Geist did not survey homeschoolers, but did survey public librarians and staff. Geist does not supply the number of surveys returned but did list the eleven libraries that took part in the survey. The survey was supplied with the study. All of the questions asked were open-ended, except one. Geist did not draw any conclusion from her results. Instead, she listed each question and quoted responses from the survey. At the end of the survey question section, Geist reviewed some literature and gave some statistics from Florida's Department of Education and the Home School Legal Defense Association. Geist (1994) made a brief statement on how libraries are important to homeschoolers: "with guidance and assistance from the librarian, the library's resources can be utilized to their full extent" (p. 27). She also included lists of sources for homeschoolers. These included kinds of programs that libraries can offer and other information to help librarians with dealing with homeschoolers.

Two research studies were done in Ohio. Schwartz's (1991) research was on the Ohio homeschooling population and how they used the public library resources. This study was done in 1991. Schwartz did not define any terms nor did he review any literature. He did not include any assumptions or limitations in his paper. Schwartz's research objectives included: do homeschoolers use the library, how often, what kind of programs do they come to, and what can the library do to provide more service for them?

Schwartz distributed his survey at a statewide convention in June of 1991. Over two thousand persons attended this convention and one hundred and fifty surveys were distributed. The number of persons who returned the survey was one hundred and thirty-nine. Schwartz's survey included many questions about their methods of homeschooling and what kinds of curriculum were they using. Schwartz included tables and charts to illustrate the responses. Schwartz found that 99% percent stated that they use the public library for additional sources of information. In addition, 61% used the library more than several times a week. In the survey, one of the questions asked why don't you use the library? Five respondents filled in the question although only one person stated in an early question that they do not use the library. Schwartz did attempt to explain this anomaly. Schwartz did not discuss the results of the survey or what others investigations could be done in the future. Schwartz did end with a recommendation that all libraries should become aware of their unique populations in their communities.

The second Ohio study, by Gatten, was a case study of the development of homeschooling services in the Stow Public Library. Gatten's (1994) purpose was to create a model of potential services and programs for public libraries to use when creating services and programs. "It was hoped that the results of this examination would provide to other public libraries some direction for creating services and programs for the growing number of homeschoolers in their respective communities" (p.5). Gatten included definitions of homeschooler, homeschooled student, and homeschool educator. She also gave a list of assumptions, which included that libraries should respect each patrons' views and opinions. Another assumption that Gatten believed was that no library can fully satisfy the needs of all homeschoolers. She also listed some very

important restraints like budget and the number of staff members. Gatten's study used several different methods of gathering data. She included observations and dialogues with staff members and librarians. Gatten also stated that she intended to interpret the records of the library and include an analysis of professional literature. The Stow Public Library created a committee of staff members and homeschoolers to discuss the different ways the library can best serve the homeschooling population. Gatten listed the results of the meetings in tables by topic. Gatten listed the number of votes each topic received and then discussed the feasibility of each item. In the analysis section of the paper, Gatten did not discuss how she interpreted the library records, nor what kinds information she was looking for in her search of the records. Gatten concluded with some recommendations for the Stow Library and provided a recommended model of resources and ideas for libraries to have and use for homeschoolers.

Another case study was Bretz's study of the Mebane Public Library in North Carolina. The Bretz (2000) study focused on several concepts: level of awareness of the homeschoolers about the library collection and programs, the use of the collection and programs, and the adequacy of the collection and programs. Bertz hoped to "identify the strengths and weaknesses in the area of collection development and programming " (p.1). Bretz started with a history of homeschooling and libraries. She quoted homeschooling sources as well as librarian type sources. Her methodology was clearly explained and understandable. She defined term some terms but not homeschooling. Sixty-five surveys were sent out by mail and forty-eight were returned. Bretz explained the results in detail. She provided many graphs and charts to illustrate her data. The conclusion section of her paper was quite extensive. She was one of the few researchers that kept her conclusions

separate from the data analysis section. Bertz found that some programs were not attended by homeschoolers because they were unaware of it. Thirty four percent of the homeschoolers were unaware of the summer reading program. Most were happy with the library's collection and program. Bretz concluded that this survey should be done in every public library and not only for homeschoolers but for each special population.

The last research to be discussed is another case study also in North Carolina. Young (1995) studied parents' needs and perceptions of libraries. Young also hoped that this case study could be used as a collection development tool for librarians. Young hypothesized that homeschoolers do not use the public library much. Young felt that homeschoolers may perceive that the public library is allied with the school system. From this report it was a little hard to understand Young's methodology. Young sent out eighty-seven surveys but only received six useful surveys back. Case by case description of each of the six surveys were given in the analysis. The results that were discussed vary, but all of them stated that they used the library as a supplement to their curriculum. Five out of the six claimed that they were heavy users. Although this went against Young's hypothesis, he did not discuss his hypothesis again nor that he was incorrect. Young concluded that homeschooling families are all-different and "cannot be pigeonholed easily"(p.39).

Summary

Throughout all the literature reviewed one clear conclusion can be made, homeschoolers do use the public library often. Many researchers suggested that each library conduct

their own survey of homeschoolers. Each population is as unique as are the libraries.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study focused on if the Atlantic County Library System was meeting the needs of the homeschoolers in the Atlantic County. This study identified how often homeschool educators were using the library, what programs and services were helpful to them, and what services need to change, through use of a written questionnaire produced by the researcher. The questionnaire was designed to investigate: How often do homeschoolers use the library, what programs and services are helpful to them, and what services and programs can be change to fit their needs better.

Population and Sample

The subjects in this research were obtained from the two homeschooling organizations, Crossways and Friends of Homeschooling, which meets at the Galloway Branch of the Atlantic County Library System. The Atlantic County Library System has nine branches throughout Atlantic County, New Jersey. The homeschool educators, who belong to the two organizations, lived throughout Atlantic County, and used several branches of the Atlantic County Library System. These two groups were the largest identified groups that used the Atlantic County Library System.

Variables

The dependent variable in this study was the frequency of use by the homeschool educators of the public library. The independent variables were: what branch was used most

often; if material was requested from other Atlantic County Libraries; if the loan periods were long enough; purposes for library use; and what services was the library used for.

Method of Data Collection

A written survey was distributed to two homeschooling groups during their meetings. The survey was distributed by the researcher at the beginning of the meetings. The researcher informed both groups that all participation was voluntary and confidential. In addition, the results would be presented to the librarians of the Atlantic County Library System. Participants were asked to return surveys to a table at the end of the meeting. The survey was distributed at the Crossways homeschooling meeting on February 8 2001. The survey was also distributed to the members of the Friends of Homeschooling at their bi-weekly meeting in February of 2001. Twenty-nine surveys were distributed altogether and twenty-eight were returned.

Reliability and Validity

The data for this study were collected in the form of a written survey authored by the researcher. The survey is given in full in Appendix A. The survey was pre-tested by students in the Master's of Librarianship program at Rowan University and by three homeschool educators who do not belong to either of the sample groups.. The data were then analyzed by using descriptive statistics.

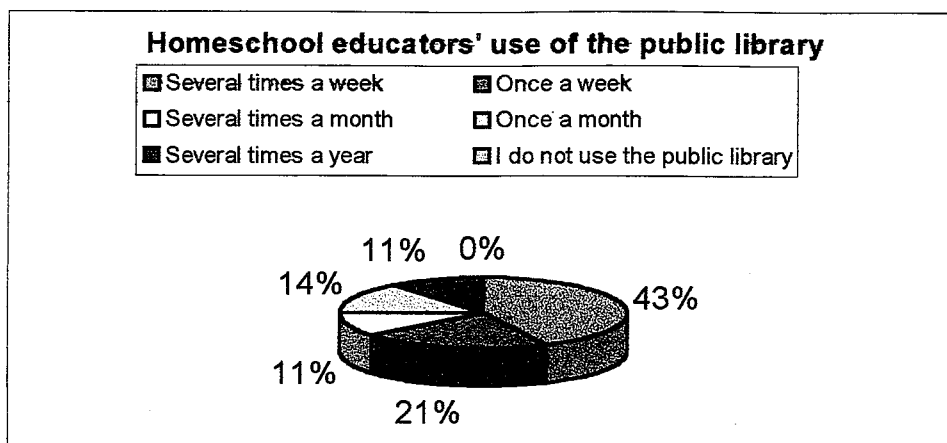
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Twenty-nine surveys were distributed at two different meeting of homeschool educators. Twenty-eight surveys were returned after the meetings for a 96.6% response rate. Homeschool educators were first asked how often they use the library. The largest percent, 42.8%, of homeschool educators responded that they used the public library several times a week. Once a week came in at the next highest response at 21.4%. Fourteen point three percent of homeschool educators used the public library once a month, and both responses of several times a month and several times a year received a response rate of 10.7% Figure 1 shows the actual results.

Homeschool educators' use of the public library
Figure 1

| How often homeschool educators use the library | # of responses |
|--|----------------|
| Several times a week | 12 |
| Once a week | 6 |
| Several times a month | 3 |
| Once a month | 4 |
| Several times a year | 3 |
| I do not use the public library | 0 |



The next question asked homeschool educators what library in the Atlantic County Library System (ACLS) they used the most. Some homeschool educators chose more than one library. The Galloway Library received the most responses with 18. The next closest library was the Mays Landing Library with 8 responses. Egg Harbor Township received 3 responses and Hammonton received 2. Brigantine and Pleasantville both received one response each.

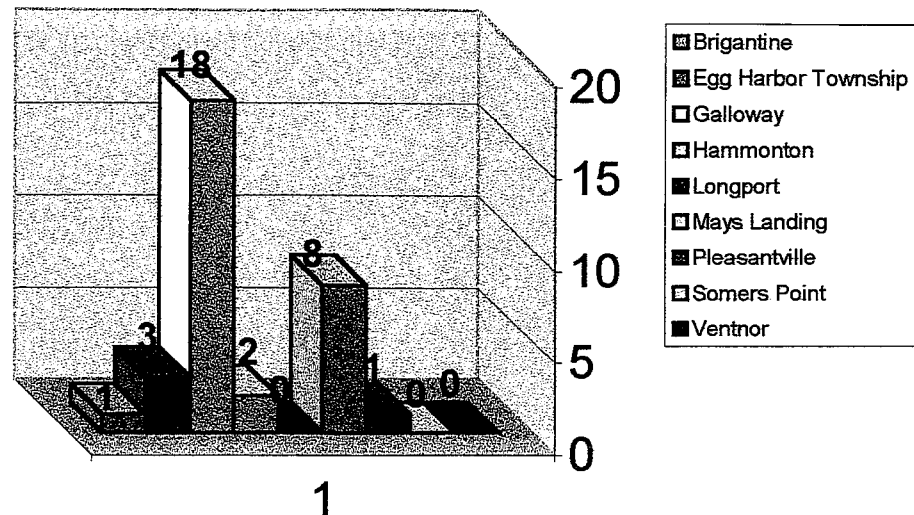
What branch homeschool educators used the most

Figure 2

What Library used # of responses

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| Brigantine | 1 |
| Egg Harbor Township | 3 |
| Galloway | 18 |
| Hammonton | 2 |
| Longport | 0 |
| Mays Landing | 8 |
| Pleasantville | 1 |
| Somers Point | 0 |
| Ventnor | 0 |

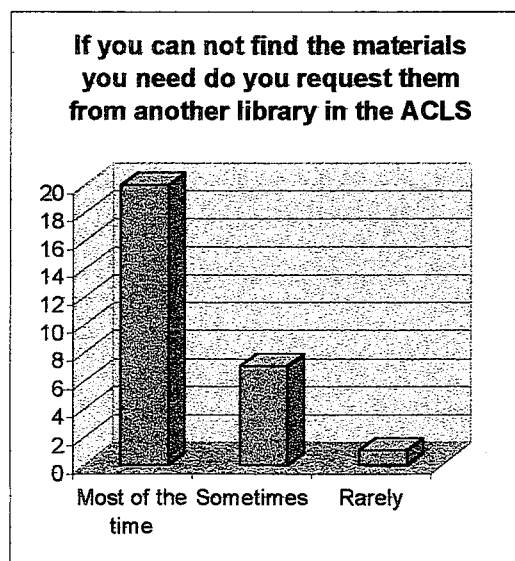
What branch homeschool educators used the most



When homeschool educators were asked if they could not find the material they needed would they request it from another library in the ACLS system, 71.4% stated they would ask most of time. Twenty-five percent stated that they would sometimes, and only 3.5% stated they rarely used this service.

Do homeschool educators request materials from other libraries in the ACLS?

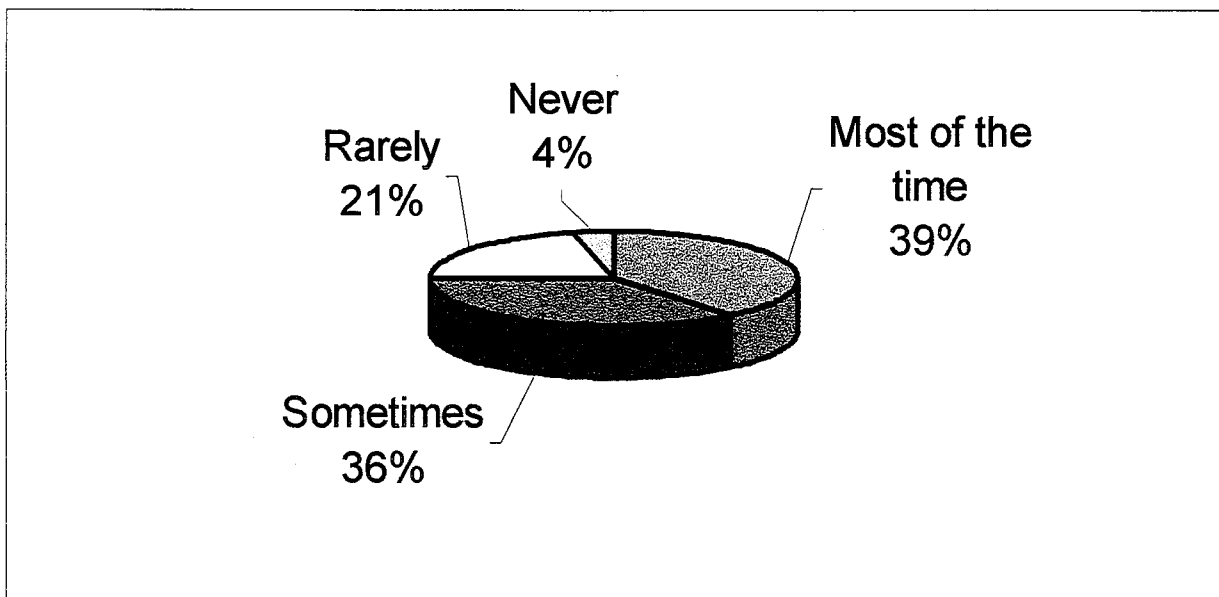
Figure 3



Question 4 asked if homeschool educators used the inter-library loan system when the item was not located in the library system. Thirty-nine point three percent stated they used it most of the time and 35.7% stated that they used it sometimes. Twenty-one point four percent stated they rarely used the system, and one person, 3.5%, wrote they never used the ILL service.

Homeschool educators use of ILL

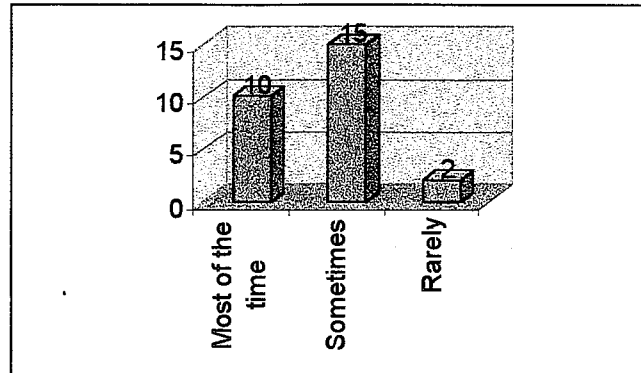
Figure 4



When homeschool educators were asked if the loan period of three weeks was long enough, 53.6% responded with sometimes, and 39.3 responded most of the time. Ten point seven percent responded that it was rarely long enough.

Is three weeks long enough?

Figure 5

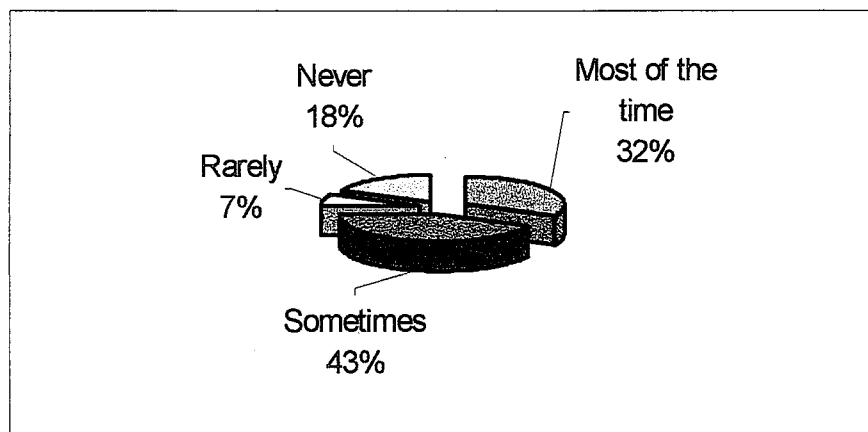


Note: Responses given in actually numbers

The next question homeschool educators were asked was if the loan period for videos was long enough. Forty-two point nine percent of homeschool educators felt that sometimes a three-day loan period was long enough. Thirty-two point one percent reported that most of time, three days were sufficient. Seventeen point nine percent responded that they never used videos, and 7.1% found that three days were rarely enough time for a video.

Is a three day loan period long enough for videos?

Figure 6



Question seven asked homeschool educators how often they needed to renew. Forty-six point four percent responded most of the time they renewed their items. Thirty-nine point three percent responded that they sometimes do, and 14.3 % found that they rarely renewed their items.

The next question asked what kind of resources homeschool educators typically use in the library. The children's sections received the most responses, and magazines seem to have one of the lowest responses. See the table 1 for complete results.

Resources used most often by homeschool educators

Table 1

| Type of Item | <i>Most of the time</i> | <i>Sometimes</i> | <i>Rarely</i> |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Adult Fiction | 4 | 11 | 5 |
| Young Adult Fiction | 7 | 9 | 6 |
| Juvenile Fiction | 12 | 7 | 6 |
| Easy Readers | 14 | 6 | 1 |
| Adult Non-Fiction | 8 | 8 | 3 |
| Young Adult Non-Fiction | 10 | 6 | 2 |
| Juvenile Non-Fiction | 16 | 4 | 1 |
| Magazines for Adults | 0 | 3 | 9 |
| Magazines for Juvenile | 3 | 6 | 6 |
| Books on Tape for Adults | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| Books on Tape for Juvenile | 5 | 8 | 4 |
| Language Tapes | 1 | 5 | 5 |
| Entertainment Videos for Adults | 2 | 6 | 7 |
| Entertainment Videos for Children | 6 | 8 | 4 |
| Informational Videos for Adults | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| Informational Videos for Children | 6 | 9 | 2 |
| Adult Reference Material | 1 | 9 | 3 |
| Juvenile Reference Material | 5 | 10 | 2 |
| Other | 0 | 2 | 1 |

Use of fiction and non fiction by homeschool educators

Figure 7

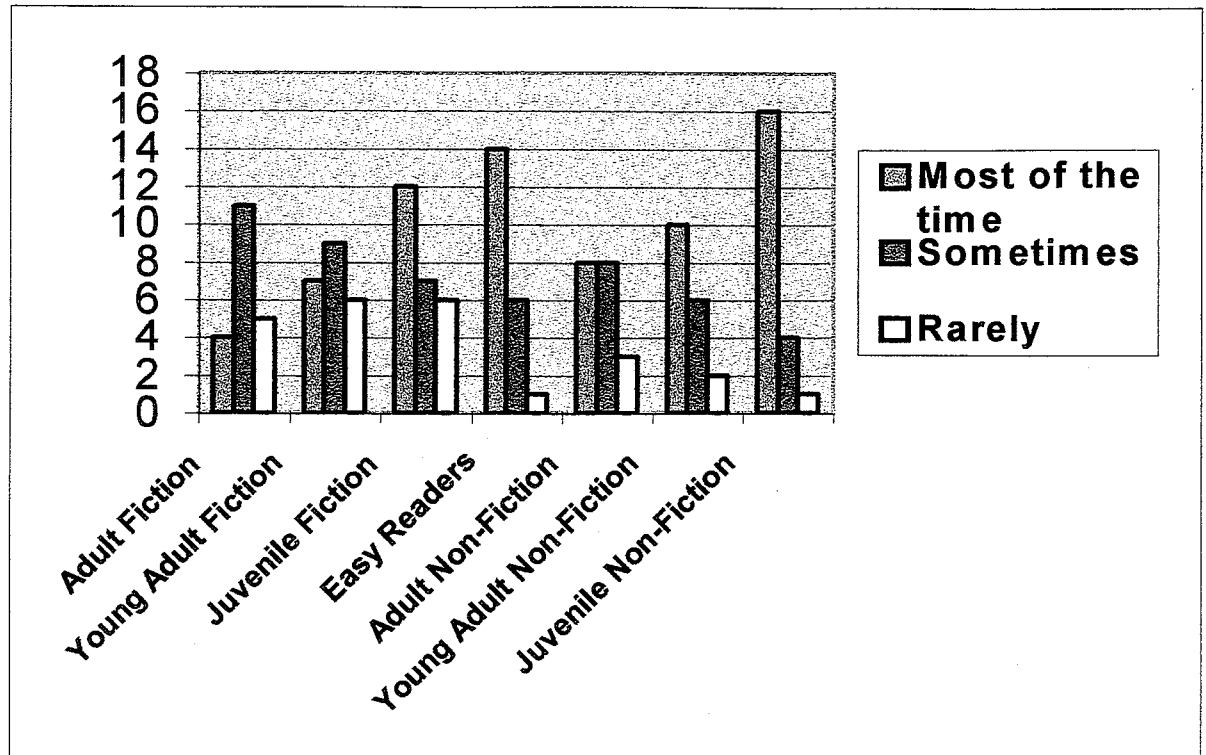


Figure 7 illustrates the usage of fiction and nonfiction by homeschool educators. Juvenile non-fiction was the heaviest used followed by Easy Readers. Adult non-fiction and young adult fiction was the least used by homeschool educators.

Table 2 illustrates what kinds of public library activities and program homeschool educators attend. Again, children's storytimes and craft programs were used the most. In addition, many homeschool educators found that having a meeting room available was very helpful.

Activities preferred by homeschool educators

Table 2

| Program or Activity | Very Helpful | Sometimes helpful | Rarely helpful |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Craft programs Adults | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Storytime | 18 | 2 | 0 |
| Reading Club | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| Summer reading Club | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| Internet | 5 | 0 | 2 |
| Internet Workshop | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Guest Speakers | 9 | 3 | 1 |
| Adult Workshops | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Books Discussion | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Poetry Reading | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| NJ Council for the Humanities | 9 | 0 | 3 |
| Meeting Room | 18 | 2 | 0 |
| Magazine Databases | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Business databases | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Craft Programs Children | 14 | 4 | 0 |
| Tours | 1 | 2 | 4 |

Very few homeschool educators responded to the last two questions. Only 25% of homeschool educators listed other programs they would like to see the library offer. Some of the responses were: a safety class, educational seminars, more informational videos for teens, toddler storytimes, homeschooling workshops, and more reading programs. To see a full list of responses see Appendix B.

The last question asked if the homeschool educators had any additional comments. Again, there was a low response rate to this question (39.3%). One person requested more Christian materials and another person requested curriculum guides. To see a full list of responses see Appendix C.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The homeschool educators in this sample were regular library users. More than half of the homeschool educators surveyed used the library system at least once a week. Forty-three percent responded that they used the library several times a week and 21% responded that they used it once a week. A total of 64% of homeschool educators surveyed were in a library on a weekly basis.

Homeschool educators appeared to use the Galloway Township Library more often than other libraries. Galloway received an overwhelming number of responses, far more than all other libraries. This response was predictable as Galloway is the busiest library in the Atlantic County Library System and this survey was carried out at the Galloway Library. Both homeschooling groups used the meeting room of the Galloway library for planned activities and meetings. It appears that the Galloway Library was used most often by members of these two homeschooling groups. Other libraries may also have homeschooling patrons, but those patrons may not have taken part in this survey. Unless a survey was taken in all the libraries in the ACLS, it remains unclear which library has the most homeschooling patrons.

The next two questions dealt with homeschool educators not finding the information they need. The first question asked homeschool educators if they order books and other items from other libraries in the ACLS. An overwhelming number of

homeschool educators, 71%, used this service of having books and other items sent to a convent library for them. The next question discussed if they used the inter-library loan service. If an item is not located in the library system, a search may be done to see if the item is located anywhere in the country. The down side of this process is that it may take 4 to 6 weeks for the patron to receive the item. It appears that homeschool educators were aware of this service but it was unclear why it was not used more often.

Homeschool educators may be finding the materials they needed in the ACLS. They may not need to look elsewhere, or homeschool educators may not have had the time to wait for the item to come in.

The next series of questions discussed whether homeschool educators have enough borrowing time with the materials. The first question that dealt with this issue asked homeschool educators if a three-loan period for items was long enough. Fifty-three point six percent responded that only sometimes was this long enough, but only 10.7 % of homeschool educators responded that it was rarely enough. Another 39.3% responded that most of the time, three weeks was long enough for materials. Another question asked homeschool educators how often did they renew their materials. Forty-six point four percent of homeschool educators responded that they renewed their materials most of the time. In addition, another 39.3% responded that they sometimes renewed their items. Looking at these results it appears that most homeschool educators did need a longer period for their items. It may be suggested that the library extend the loan period to four weeks to homeschool educators for their items.

Homeschool educators used the library system mainly for children's materials. Juvenile fiction, non-fiction and easy readers appear to be the main resources used by

homeschool educators. Homeschool educators did not seem to be active readers themselves or at least did not use the library for themselves. All types of resources, fiction non-fiction, videos, books on tape, etc... seem to be used by homeschool educators.

The ACLS offered many different kinds of programs and activities. A large number of homeschool educators relied on having a meeting room available for their use. It was apparently helpful to have one large place where large groups can meet. Storytime was also a very popular program among homeschool educators. Storytime is for very young children, 3 ½ to 5. It appeared that homeschool educators take the children to storytime but children grow older, they did not move onto the next older reading group activity the library offered, the Reading Clubs and the Summer Reading Club. A very small group, 4, stated that used the Summer Reading Club. However, 18 homeschool educators responded that they used the storytime program. The last two questions had an array of responses and suggestions. A toddler time was asked for by two homeschool educators and also a larger selection of guest speakers. For suggestions about the service of the ACLS, many homeschool educators seemed to appreciate what the library was already offering and only had a few suggestions for improvements.

Possible use of Results

This survey could be very helpful to member of the ACLS. It was apparent that homeschool educators were regular patrons of their library. This survey could help other branches to understand the importance of meeting the need of the homeschooling patron. Hopefully, the ACLS will look at this survey and see what policies and programs can be changed to meet the needs of homeschooling patrons.

Recommendations for Further Study

Identifying homeschool educators can be difficult in certain States like New Jersey, but a national study of homeschool educators' uses of the library would be very interesting. Also, results of a survey of larger number of homeschool educators in the Atlantic County area would be interesting and useful. The literature search for this study revealed that many others who wrote on homeschooling suggested further studies in this area. After looking at the populations of Atlantic County and comparing them to other areas researchers studied, it is apparent that homeschooling populations vary. Local or regional studies may be the best way to understand the public library needs of the homeschooling population.

APPENDIX A

Survey of Homeschool Educators Using the ACLS

1. Generally, how often do you use a public library? (Check one)
☐ Several times a week ☐ Once a month
☐ Once a week ☐ Several times a year
☐ Several times a month ☐ I do not use the Public
Library(skip to question 11)
2. What branch of the Atlantic County Library System do you most often use?
☐ Brigantine ☐ Egg Harbor Township
☐ Galloway ☐ Hammonton
☐ Mays Landing ☐ Pleasantville
☐ Ventnor ☐ Longport
☐ Somers Point ☐ Other_____
3. If you can not find the materials you need do you request them from another library in the Atlantic Library System?
☐ Most of the time ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely
4. If you can not find the materials you need in the Atlantic County Library System do you ask for them through Inter-library Loan?
☐ Most of the time ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely
5. Do you find the general loan period of three weeks long enough?
☐ Most of the time ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely
6. Do you find the 3 day loan period for videos long enough?
☐ Most of the time ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely
7. How often do you renew books you have checked out?
☐ Most of the time ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely

8. Which library resources do you typically use the library for? (Please check all that apply in the first column). Also, how often do you use these materials? (Please check one, column B, C or D).

| <i>A</i> | <i>B</i> Most of the Time | <i>C</i> Sometimes | <i>D</i> Rarely |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Adult Fiction | | | |
| Young Adult Fiction | | | |
| Juvenile Fiction | | | |
| Easy Readers | | | |
| Adult Non-Fiction | | | |
| Young Adult Non-Fiction | | | |
| Juvenile Non-Fiction | | | |
| Magazines for Adult | | | |
| Magazines for Juvenile | | | |
| Books On Tape for Adults | | | |
| Books On Tape Juvenile | | | |
| Language Tapes | | | |
| Entertainment Videos for Adults | | | |
| Entertainment Videos for Children | | | |
| Informational Videos for Adults | | | |
| Information Videos for Children | | | |
| Adult Reference Material | | | |
| Juvenile Reference Materials | | | |
| Other | | | |

9. Of the programs and activities offered by the public library which ones have you attended? (Please check all that apply in column A). Also, how would you rate the helpfulness? Please check one, column B, C or D)

| <i>A</i> | | <i>B</i> Very helpful | <i>C</i> Sometimes helpful | <i>D</i> Rarely helpful |
|----------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Craft programs Adult | | | |
| | Storytime | | | |
| | Reading Club | | | |
| | Summer Reading Club | | | |
| | Internet | | | |
| | Internet Workshop | | | |
| | Guest speakers | | | |
| | Adult Workshops | | | |
| | Book Discussions | | | |
| | Poetry Readings | | | |
| | NJ Council for the Humanities | | | |
| | Meeting Room | | | |
| | Magazine Databases | | | |
| | Business Databases | | | |
| | Craft Programs children | | | |
| | Tours | | | |
| | Other | | | |

10. What kinds of programs would you like the library to have which are currently not offered?

11. Please use the space below to add any comments you may have about public library service for Homeschoolers.



Thank you for your Participation!

APPENDIX B
KINDS OF PROGRAMS WOULD HOMESCHOOL EDUCATORS LIKE THE
LIBRARY TO HAVE WHICH ARE CURRENTLY NOT OFFERED.

PLEASE USE THE SPACE BELOW TO ADD ANY COMMENTS YOU MAY HAVE
ABOUT PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE FOR HOMESCHOOLERS

- I like to use old biographies and appreciate libraries that have a wide selection such as Hammonton. I appreciate the use of your meeting rooms. The Galloway branch has been very accommodating.
- I would like to see more educational material. (curriculum information) etc...
- More times for children to get together; do activities, presentations and such during school time for homeschoolers
- Now that it is more common in the area more storytimes.
- Many librarians are very helpful with finding materials in various subject areas. Public libraries are nearly essential in a person's growth in knowledge and exploration of information; homeschoolers desire to foster learning in their children is a natural pairing with the services and materials that libraries offer. I would benefit from more info videos for children or teens.
- I would like to see more selections of informational topics in juvenile/young adult books. I would like to have available more audio books for juvenile/young adult both educational and entertaining
- We love the history programs that the library has had. We would love to see more of them.
- Wonderful, it makes our homeschooling goals easier to achieve. Everyone at Galloway Library goes beyond their duties to help us. Thank you Galloway Library staff.
- The librarians are very helpful. The Internet site is very helpful-being able to request books 7 renew books online is very helpful. Would love to see more kids books in foreign languages. (There only one book in German in the system).
- More Christian topics in books, videos would be terrific-and more copies available of popular books
- I think the search index could be greatly improved. When someone begins to reserve a book that can't be reserved, they shouldn't have to get far into the reserve process, before the screen shows the "sorry no holds on this title" message. Also, it should be easier to put in several search terms to narrow the # of books that come up. A person should be able to search in JUST juvenile fiction, or just Adult non-fiction, etc. too.

APPENDIX C
HOMESCHOOL EDUCATORS COMMENTS ABOUT PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE.

**WHAT KINDS OF PROGRAMS WOULD YOU LIKE THE LIBRARY TO HAVE
WHICH ARE CURRENTLY NOT OFFERED?**

- More classes or workshops for kid projects (Hands on)
- Toddler storytime
- Maybe safety classes
- Educational seminars—How to use a resource properly--- how to use the card file on computer
- Toddler reading/storytime
- Homeschooling workshops

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